

# PRSA*notes*

*An electronic newsletter by and for the 200+ members of the Central Iowa Chapter*  
**June, 2003**

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## **Chapter gains six new APRs, claims another**

Passing the recent Beta Examination for Accreditation in Public Relations gave APR status to six Central Iowa Chapter members and one former member. They are:

- Emily Abbas, APR
- Courtney Chabot Dreyer, APR
- Desiree Fletcher-Hayes, APR
- Ryan Hanser, APR
- Leigh McGivern, APR
- David Remund, APR (now of Charlotte, NC)
- Laura A. Vanden Bosch, APR

Central Iowa's new APRs represent 9 percent of those accredited nationwide as the result of the Beta Examination and the largest group among the 36 chapters represented. The Puget Sound chapter had four members accredited and the St. Louis chapter had 3. There were 77 persons accredited, representing the Public Relations Society of America (PRSA) and five partner groups.

In preparing for the Examination, Emily Abbas organized a study group in which most of the local candidates participated.

Announcement of the new status came from the Universal Accreditation Board, formed in 1998, which now includes nine public relations organizations. The program is administered by PRSA, which has had its own accreditation program since 1964.

John McCarroll, APR, Central Iowa Chapter's accreditation chair, said the new accreditation exam will be available this summer. Like the previous approach to accreditation, it involves two parts, but they are substantially different from the prior exam. The "readiness review," which replaces the oral exam, precedes the new entirely multiple choice written portion. A candidate must prepare and submit written plans and other materials for approval in the readiness review before proceeding to the final phase.

McCarroll said Central Iowa Chapter will assist chapter members who want to pursue accreditation. "Details of the preparation sessions will be announced later," he added. Accreditation information is available at [www.accreditationboard.org](http://www.accreditationboard.org). Or click on [www.prsa.org](http://www.prsa.org) and go to "Professional Development," then "Universal Accreditation Program."

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### **GuideOne Insurance wins PRSA's Bronze Anvil Award for internal magazine**

GuideOne Insurance was recently awarded the coveted 2003 Bronze Anvil Award, sponsored by PRSA National. The award, which recognizes creative tactics in a public relations campaign, was announced during a special event in New York City June 5.

GuideOne received the Bronze Anvil Award for its "*Going For Great!*" Magazine in the "Magazine for Internal Audiences" category. As the winner, GuideOne's "*Going For Great!*" Magazine, which also is a four-consecutive-year Central Iowa Chapter PRIME Award winner, has been selected as the nation's best publication designed to provide in-depth information about the organization, its initiatives, strategies and priorities. This year, 1,074 entries were submitted in 39 categories. One winner was selected in each of 37 categories; no winners were chosen in two categories.

"We offer our congratulations to GuideOne Insurance for being a Bronze Anvil winner," said Gerard F. Corbett, APR, Fellow PRSA, chairman, Honors & Awards Committee and vice president and general manager, Hitachi America, Ltd. "The company's exceptionally

inspired tactical solutions to a public relations challenge sets it apart from the many worthy entries received in this competition."

The Bronze Anvil Awards were created by PRSA more than 33 years ago to recognize outstanding public relations tactics, individual teams or components or campaigns. Founded in 1947 and headquartered in West Des Moines, GuideOne Insurance is the leading insurer of churches in the United States. GuideOne Corporate Communications team members Emily Abbas, APR; Sarah Buckley, APR, and Melany Moeller-are all active members in PRSA's Central Iowa Chapter.

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## **By-law changes will be considered at annual meeting June 19**

The Central Iowa Chapter PRSA Board of Directors voted at its April 8, 2003, meeting to change the chapter by-laws as follows:

- Add the Board position of Program Chair-Elect.
- Delete one Director position from the Board.

These changes were recommended by the Board following analysis of the membership survey conducted in 2003. Members indicated that programming was an important benefit of their chapter membership. To ensure strong programming as well as continuity from one year to the next, the Board voted to add the Program Chair-Elect position.

In addition, the Board voted to delete one Director position to maintain a reasonable size Board that remains reflective of our overall membership.

Members are asked to vote on these by-laws changes at the chapter's **Annual Meeting scheduled for June 19, 2003**, at 4 p.m. at Rock Bottom Restaurant & Brewery, 4508 University Ave., West Des Moines. This meeting is also an opportunity to learn more about the past year's results, recognize the chapter's volunteer leadership and network with peers. The meeting will be followed by a social hour.

Mike Palmer, APR, president, said members are encouraged to attend this meeting to help celebrate another successful year and to thank the outgoing officers, board members and committee chairs for their service.

### **The recommended by-laws changes are (changes are noted in boldface):**

Article V Board of Directors

Section 1. Composition

The governing body of the chapter shall be a board of directors consisting of the president, president-elect, program chairperson, **program chair-elect**, secretary, treasurer, treasurer-elect, the immediate past president, the assembly delegate(s), **two directors-at-large**, the accreditation director, the ethics officer (duties may be held by an assembly delegate) and the public relations officer.

Section 3. Directors-At-Large

**On the first board of the chapter one director shall serve two years, one director shall serve one year. Thereafter, one director shall be elected each year by the chapter membership at its annual meeting to serve a term of two years beginning July 1st, next ensuing and until his/her successor is elected and installed. The newly elected director will chair the membership committee during his/her first year on the board.**

**Section 8. Program Chair-Elect**

**The program chair-elect shall, in the absence or disability of the program chairperson, exercise the powers and duties of the program chairperson. He/she also shall assist the program chairperson in arranging speakers and chapter meeting locations and perform other duties as prescribed by the board of directors. The program chair-elect shall become the program chairperson in the following year.**

**Sections 9-11:** These sections have been renumbered accordingly to reflect addition of Section 8. Program Chair-Elect.

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**Here is proposed slate of 2003-04 Central Iowa Chapter officers and committee chairs**

**President** Rob Schweers, APR

**President-Elect** Emily Abbas, APR

**Past President/Scholarship** Mike Palmer, APR

**Treasurer** Tim Hackbart

**Treasurer-Elect** Darin Leach

**Program Chair** Sarah Rasmussen

**Program Chair-Elect** Paul Kluding

**Secretary** Antoinette Bernich

**Director #1** Jill Spiekerman-Carrothers, APR

**Director #2/Membership** Kim Sporrer

**Accreditation** John McCarroll, APR

**Delegate #1/Ethics** Kelly Sankey, APR

**Delegate #2** Erin Downs, APR

**Delegate #3** Lucinda Stephenson, APR

**Public Relations** Aaron Putze, APR

**Awards** Ryan Dick, Amy Kearns

**Job Network** Desiree Fletcher-Hayes, APR

**Newsletter** Wayne Davis, APR

**Professional Development** Lori Schulte, Bev Corron

**Technology** Joanna Schroeder, APR

**Drake University Liaisons** Allan Urlis, APR; Kevin Waetke, APR

**Iowa State University Liaisons** Jill Spiekerman-Carrothers, APR; Murray Williams

**Simpson College Liaisons** Amanda Carstens Steward, Alvera Kromer

**Student Liaison** TBD (ex-officio member)

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## **Program speakers discuss communication changes**

Four speakers at the May 15 Central Iowa Chapter luncheon meeting cited several changes in the way they do business-some of them common to all and some specific to their own operations.

On the program were Ron Hanser, APR, president of Hanser & Associates Public Relations; Timothy D. Grabinski, director communications services for MidAmerican Energy Holding Company; Courtney Chabot Dreyer, APR, public affairs manager for Pioneer Hi-Bred International, Inc., and Randy McNeal, marketing director for Blank Park Zoo/Foundation. Stressing the importance of counting "outcome" instead of "output," Hanser noted the changes in media relations resulting from shorter news cycles and reduced newsroom budgets. He has experienced decreased localization in the practice of public relations, but noted that globalization sometimes fosters nationalism. He predicted a rise in public relations spending.

"We've had to learn to play well with other children," Grabinski observed. He was referring to his company's shift from a regional to a national and international agency. But despite the expanded scope of his company, he said the emphasis is very much on the

customer and on the firm's "grass roots." Although the company has encountered cultural differences among its customers, he's found a one-on-one approach the best.

Chabot Dreyer also has had to deal with global audiences and has encountered language problems in dealing with far-flung constituents. Translating technical information for lay audiences also presents challenges, she said. "Everybody realizes what they do has an effect outside the organization," she said, adding that "we have to be 'boundary scanners' to see what's coming."

McNeal has experienced many changes since the management of Blank Park Zoo was transferred to a foundation. In his organization there is a big emphasis on donor information and donor relations and a major concern for "the people who write the checks." McNeal has found that he has had to develop partnerships in order to get wide coverage of the zoo, and noted that his department is growing "but so are the responsibilities."

The meeting was held in the Iowa Farm Bureau Federation auditorium in West Des Moines.

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## **Member news . . .**

### **Davis analyzes comments from Beta candidate survey**

Individuals who sat for the Beta Examination for Accreditation in Public Relations recently actual candidates, previously-accredited members and some students were asked to complete an on-line survey about their experiences. Four of the 47 questions in the survey were open- ended and allowed respondents to comment about their communication with national PRSA in preparation for the exam, report any surprises they encountered, discuss opinion changes, if any, after taking the multiple choice test, and to voice their opinions about the testing process. Wayne P. Davis, APR, undertook to analyze the responses to the open-ended questions and reported his findings to the Universal Accreditation Board (UAB). There were approximately 90 responses to each of the questions.

Davis found that a majority of the respondents scored the UAB communication and information transmission on the plus side, but a significant number (25) spoke of the need for a study guide directly related to the Examination. (Incidentally, new material to help candidates prepare for the examination is posted at: <http://accreditationboard.org>.)

The UAB members were expected to discuss the survey results at their next meeting June 20.

### **Ferchen Named Manager of Media Relations for Iowa Health - Des Moines**

Jon Ferchen has been named manager of media relations for Iowa Health - Des Moines. In this role, Ferchen will oversee the release of external information and targeted communications strategies for Iowa Methodist Medical Center and Iowa Lutheran Hospital. He will report to Joe Smith, APR, director of corporate communications.

Prior to joining Iowa Health - Des Moines, Ferchen served as a public relations consultant for Wells Fargo Home Mortgage. There he planned, managed and implemented internal and external communication strategies. Ferchen also served as a public relations account executive for Strategic America, where he administered public relations and marketing tactics on behalf of agency clients.

Ferchen obtained his bachelor of arts degree in public relations from the University of Northern Iowa in Cedar Falls.

### **Kluding earns ARAG Group interview on CNBC**

Paul Kluding, public relations manager for Des Moines-based ARAG Group, reports his efforts paid off in an on-camera interview for his company on CNBC's "Business Center" in early May. The program is the network's signature evening business newscast, broadcast live from the floor of the New York Stock Exchange.

ARAG Group is a legal insurance provider, and the company recently added identity theft protection as a component to its legal insurance plan. Kluding had been continually distributing news and updates about the coverage to insurance industry publications, as well as to national media that might be interested in how ARAG Group's ID theft coverage is quite different than that of other providers, given the legal component, and the growing epidemic of ID theft. But he said he never suspected exposure like this. "It had been a couple months since I had distributed any news of consequence regarding our ID theft coverage, so when I received the call from a reporter at CNBC, as soon as I hung up the phone I quickly checked my database to make sure this person was really from CNBC, and not just a fellow PR practitioner playing a joke on me," Kluding said. He then hurried his spokesperson to KDSM-TV, where the interview was recorded and up-linked to New York.

Kluding noted that MediaMap, a national PR database of editorial contacts and outlets, offers this suggestion to professionals pitching CNBC: "PR professionals should be aware that CNBC typically covers only publicly-traded companies worth over 500 million dollars, the exception being a smaller company that is somehow directly related to a major national or international news story."

Fortunately, said Kluding, ARAG Group was quite an exception, since the company is privately held and employs fewer than 100 in its Des Moines headquarters. The story was rebroadcast the following Saturday on NBC's "Weekend Today," while the text of the story was also posted the following day on MSNBC.com, gaining the company unparalleled exposure.

## **Pedersen joins Essman/Associates as PR manager**

Nancy Pedersen has joined Essman/Associates as public relations manager. Pedersen will focus on raising the profiles of local, national and international clients through strategic marketing and public relations efforts.

Pedersen is a 20-year communications professional with a broad experience in economic development, insurance and financial services and not-for-profit sectors. Prior to joining Essman/Associates, she was communications manager for the Iowa Department of Economic Development (IDED), where she managed the marketing program, including business development and tourism advertising and public relations, and research and implementation of the brand, *Iowa Smart Idea*<sup>™</sup>. In addition, she oversaw communications for IDED programs, community relations, event coordination, and the IDED board and Vision Iowa board. Pedersen's previous experience includes positions as senior account executive at Strategic America and CMF&Z, 14 years in the insurance industry at the Principal Financial Group, Seabury & Smith, and J&H/KVI (now Marsh), and communications management at the Iowa Association of Electric Cooperatives and Iowa State University.

She is a member of the Public Relations Society of America, and has been president of the Iowa chapter of the International Association of Business Communicators.

Essman/Associates is located at 100 East Grand, Suite 300, Des Moines, Iowa 50309-1800, and Pedersen can be reached at 515/282-7145.

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## **News from National . . .**

### **Matalin and Carville to Open 2003 International Conference**

Mary Matalin and James Carville will be the Sunday, Oct. 26, opening general session speakers for the 2003 PRSA International Conference, Oct. 25-28, at the Hilton New Orleans Riverside, New Orleans, La. When sharp-tongued, no-nonsense Mary Matalin and "the Ragin' Cajun," James Carville, communicate, sparks fly. Wife and husband, top Republican and top Democratic strategists, respectively, Matalin and Carville know politics and media from the inside out but from opposite sides of the political spectrum. Save the date to see this entertaining, knowledgeable duo who have negotiated the very top echelons of power. Don't miss their insights on government, the press and managing perceptions, not to mention balancing a marriage and children!

### **Universal Accreditation Board Update**

The Universal Accreditation Board (UAB) continues to prepare for the July launch of the new Examination for Accreditation in Public Relations. As materials are prepared, they are added to the Web at [www.accreditationboard.org](http://www.accreditationboard.org). Recently, three new FAQs were posted. Also, the list of recommended texts for the new Examination for Accreditation in Public Relations can be found at

[http://www.prsa.org/\\_Advance/apr/publications.asp?ident=apr4](http://www.prsa.org/_Advance/apr/publications.asp?ident=apr4). If you are more the visual type, the following site will tell you how the new process will work as both a prospective candidate and as the chair of Accreditation:

[http://www.prsa.org/\\_Advance/apr/process.asp](http://www.prsa.org/_Advance/apr/process.asp). For more information, contact Kathy Mulvihill, manager, Universal Accreditation Program, PRSA, at 212/460-1436 or [kathy.mulvihill@prsa.org](mailto:kathy.mulvihill@prsa.org).

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## **Job Opportunities. . .**

### **Iowa State University, Ames, IA News Writer in Science Media Relations**

Iowa State University's News Service has an opening for a news writer. This position provides communications and public relations support to further the programs and missions of Iowa State University and specific units, including the College of Engineering, College of Liberal Arts and Sciences and various science-related centers. This is a key role within Iowa State's News Service unit. The successful candidate will establish and maintain relationships with other communicators, faculty, researchers, scientists, government officials and the media to communicate news and information about Iowa State University, a worldwide leader in science and technology. The ability to convey highly complex information in a compelling, understandable manner for diverse audiences is essential.

The candidate must hold a bachelor's degree in journalism, public relations or a related field. A minimum of three years of directly related experience in conducting interviews, writing and placing news and feature stories, and measuring results is required. Excellent written and verbal communication skills are required. Extensive working knowledge of science media relations, experience that demonstrates strategic thinking and experience in national media relations is preferred.

Iowa State is a Carnegie Foundation doctoral/research university-extensive university, a designation reserved for universities that offer a variety of degree programs through the doctorate. Iowa State is a member of the prestigious Association of American Universities. Located in Ames, a community of 50,000 people, Iowa State annually enrolls more than 27,000 students. Visit Iowa State's Web site: <http://www.iastate.edu/>. Nominations and letters of application or interest, including a resume and name/phone numbers of three references, and your electronic mail address should be sent to Annette Hacker, Manager of News Service, Iowa State University, 1013 Communications Building, Ames, IA 50011 or by e-mail to [annette@iastate.edu](mailto:annette@iastate.edu). Electronic submission is encouraged. To guarantee consideration, application must be received by June 23, 2003.

ISU is an Equal Opportunity/Affirmative Action Employer.

### **Internal Employee Communications Consultant**

Principal Financial Group has an exciting opportunity for someone with excellent writing, editing, designing and project management skills. Do you have experience developing and implementing an employee communications strategy that encompasses and infiltrates employee knowledge, attitudes and behaviors? If so, then we are looking for you!

This position requires a bachelor's degree or equivalent and 4-6 years of related experience. It will also require experience in web site design and/or employee communications. The right candidate will have good strategic thinking skills and strong leadership skills with the ability to be involved and informed of the goals and strategies of the company. Additionally, we are looking for someone with the ability to take an integrated communications approach to solve complex communications issues.

At the Principal Financial Group, we offer a competitive total compensation package and a comprehensive benefits package to meet each of your needs. If you are looking for the opportunity to get ahead in your career...apply today!

Please send your resume and cover letter to:  
Principal Financial Group,  
HR-Employment, WPRSA21370,  
Des Moines, IA 50392-0550.

AA/EEO.

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